saline water intrusion in the coastal areas of Alleppey, Ernakulam, Kolam and Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala out of which, studies in Alleppey and Ernakulam districts have been completed. As per the studies, no areas have been observed as affected by saline water intrusion except that the areas very close to the sea and backwater channels extending to a maximum of 100 metre ground water is affected by salinity to a very limited extent during summer season. Similarly, saline water intrusion in well water has not been observed except very close to sea and backwater channels. The limited saline water intrusion in areas very close to the sea and backwater channels during summer cannot be attributed to the overdraft of ground water.

As there is no saline water intrusion, no remedial measures are needed. However, the Central Ground Water Board has organised mass awareness programmes in Ernakulam district of Kerala to create awareness among the public about the ill effects of ground water overdraft, pollution etc.

SBI Home Finance Limited

*68. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any decision has been taken to scale down /close the operation of SBI Home Finance Limited;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) if not, the status of its operation; and

(d) the action taken to protect the interest of the employees in the Company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) According to State Bank of India (SBI) the Board of Directors of the SBI Home Finance Ltd. (SBIHFL) have taken a decision to scale down its operations gradually.

(b) SBIHFL has been incurring losses continuously since 1997-98 resulting in complete erosion of its net worth. The refusal of the institutional shareholders to infuse additional capital, high level of non performing assets and heavy interest burden due to acceptance of high cost public deposits have adversely affected the viability of SBIHFL.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Employees have not been adversely effected. Hence no action is required in this regard.